

Humble, Texas, to take on the Houston Lamar Redskins in the Class 5A playoffs. The game had already been postponed once and it was raining again, but the game was set to take place at 5 p.m. in Humble. Unfortunately, the team never made it to the game.

Around 2 p.m., about 28 miles from home in Devers, Texas, the chartered bus carrying the team, the coach and one parent chaperone swerved to miss debris that had fallen off a truck in front of them. The bus rolled onto its side into a muddy ditch.

Sadly, senior Alicia Bonura and sophomore Ashley Brown lost their lives in this tragedy. Six other girls were hospitalized in serious condition. Goalie Devin Martindale lost her arm in this accident. The other five girls were Lauree Thibaut, Allison Forman, Sarah Beach, Courtney Garrod, and Sarah Babin. Two of those girls have been released from the hospital and are back home.

News of the accident quickly spread back to the town and West Brook students set up a vigil in the high school gymnasium where friends and faculty prayed and hoped for the best. Soon the students were hit with the horrendous news that two of their own had been killed in this catastrophe.

According to the Beaumont Enterprise, the girls are remembered for "loving soccer, loving their school and loving everyone they came in touch with."

Alicia Bonura, in addition to playing soccer, had played basketball, she ran cross-country, and was a trainer for the West Brook football team. She played the drums in the band and sometimes she sang vocals as well. She is remembered for her wonderful laugh and a smile that would light up a room. She was ranked number five in her class of 535, and she recently decided to attend Texas A&M University to study mechanical engineering.

On her MySpace Web page she wrote: "I love to smile and love life in general and I love God. He is such a fantastic guy." Under people she would like to meet, she writes, "I can't wait to meet God." Moving words from one of God's children.

Ashley Brown was a freckle-faced girl with long red hair. Her friends said she always made people laugh and was a free spirit and had a smile that would light up a room. Her teachers said that her fellow students gravitated to her. She was an active member in her youth ministry at her church, Calvary Baptist. Besides soccer, she loved singing, playing volleyball, skiing and playing the electric guitar.

Ashley had a bulletin board in her home covered in photos and memorabilia. In the middle of the board there was a handwritten note stating the following: "You can't choose how you are going to die, but you can choose how you are going to live."

Mr. Speaker, in her 16 years on Earth, Ashley Brown lived life to the fullest, and she is going to be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to extend prayers and condolences to Alicia's and Ashley's parents, relatives, friends, and the community of Beaumont, Texas, the students and teachers and the coaches at West Brook High School and the Bruins girls soccer team. We hope that they find happiness in their fond memories of these special girls.

Alicia and Ashley truly led remarkable lives. They clearly touched so many people in their short time on Earth. Heaven is certainly brighter with Alicia and Ashley there, and the community of Beaumont Texas should take comfort. They now have two extra guardian angels looking down on them.

Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COSTS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, I ask permission to take the time of the gentleman from New Jersey.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, every week I stand here and talk about commonsense approaches to reducing gun violence in this country. And yet this body sees fit to chip away at existing gun laws. So tonight I want to talk about the effects of gun violence in terms that everybody in this body can understand, dollars and cents.

Throughout America, our States are experiencing extraordinary budget problems, forcing them to cut spending on many important initiatives. A great deal of these budget woes are caused by skyrocketing health care costs, and the continued cuts to Medicaid aren't going to help the situation.

Of course, Congress will not allow funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the true economic cost of gun violence, so we have to use data from independent sources.

Independent sources have shown gun violence costs our economy over \$100 billion every year. In fact, each gun death costs our economy \$2.8 million. Gun violence increases law enforcement spending. Gun violence costs the economy billions in lost productivity. And while Congress won't let us learn the exact amount, gun violence costs our health care system more than \$2 billion every single year.

Since gun violence plagues so many low-income communities, victims are often uninsured. And who picks up the

tab for uninsured victims of gun violence? American taxpayers, that's who. So even if you don't think about gun violence as an important issue, you are paying for it.

It is obvious something must be done, and it is also obvious that this body has no plans to intervene in this public health crisis. So it is up to our local communities and neighborhoods.

Across the country people are fed up, but they are trying to make a difference in their own area. I have been to many events that have had politicians, school officials, law enforcement officers and others telling young people about the dangers of guns. But not once has anybody turned the microphone around and asked the kids what do they think.

So many young people live on the front lines of the gun violence epidemic. The rhetoric on both sides of this issue must stop, and we must start to learn to listen.

This isn't about the second amendment; this isn't about kids dying. Many of the people who disagree with my views on the gun issue will say, Guns don't kill people; people do.

But what that doesn't mean is we can't take steps to make sure guns don't fall into the hands of the wrong people. This isn't about taking away guns from law-abiding citizens who hunt or shoot skeet, nor is it about depriving law-abiding citizens from defending themselves and their families. In fact, we can save so many lives without affecting a single lawful gun owner in this country.

This is about keeping guns away from felons and gang members. This is about making sure our police departments have the tools they need to track down illegal guns. This isn't about running honest gun dealers out of business. It is about cracking down on the 1 percent of corrupt gun dealers who sell 57 percent of the guns used in crimes.

Gun rights advocates have as much stake in this as anybody else. Many see gun violence as an inner-city problem. But let's not forget that gang violence and drug crime also started out as an inner-city problem. We acted too late, and now gangs and drugs are commonplace in suburbs and rural communities.

So as we head home for the spring recess, I ask my colleagues to do something we don't do very often or very well: listen. It is time to listen to the people being affected by gun violence. Listen to our young people in underserved communities. Listen to our police departments who are losing officers to illegal guns every week. And listen to the families who have lost loved ones due to gun violence.

The answers to this epidemic of gun violence do not reside in this Chamber or on K Street, but in the hearts and minds of the people that we represent. It is time that they are heard.

The vast majority of legal gun owners understand the need to stop gun violence. We must all work together, regardless of our interpretation of the second amendment, or whether we live in an urban, suburban, or rural area.

Let us make a commitment to replace our rhetoric with action. Let us make our communities a better and safer place for all young people of all backgrounds.

Together, we can stop this public health care crisis and save lives. I came to Congress to save lives. I will not give up on this fight. We can reduce gun violence in this country. We just have to find common ground on how we are going to do that.

COMMENDING AND HONORING THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCHENRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and commend the men and women of the Capitol Hill Police Force. I think it is important at this time that Members of Congress step forward to say thank you: thank you for your service, thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for putting so much emphasis on training, and thank you for putting the emphasis on keeping this Capitol building and all the Members and staff and visitors who come here on a frequent basis to be safe, to be secure.

I think it is important, with so much attention right now on the Capitol Police Force, that all Members of Congress, Republican and Democrat, unite to say that we support you; we think you are doing an honorable and good job.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics show that there are over 1,500 Capitol Police officers, men and women of diverse backgrounds from all over the country, and some from around the world. They come here to save lives, to protect lives.

There are over 3 million visitors that come to this historic place that we call our Nation's Capital, both Washington, D.C. and this Capitol building and this complex where we work, where some of us live.

But I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that with so much attention on the Capitol Police, it is necessary that we look at what they do on a daily basis.

It is not always easy, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the public, to see them on a daily basis; for visitors to come in, tourists, staff, Members of Congress; to see them on a daily basis. People aren't always courteous.

But what I found out about the Capitol Police officers, these men and women, is that they always will greet you with a smiling face, even when they are having a bad day; that their training is shown through by the way that they have acted over the years that they have been in service here on Capitol Hill.

As Members of Congress, we must say thank you: thank you for your sacrifice, thank you for your commitment, thank you for your dedication to our country, because after all, they are here to protect and save lives; and as Members of Congress, we should respect them for their dedication and their training; and we must honor them each and every day that we are here, because they are our colleagues as well here in the Capitol complex.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, as I said, to commend and honor the Capitol Police. It is the right thing to do. I think my colleagues should join with me in supporting the resolution that Congressman MARIO DIAZ-BALART and I filed just this evening to honor them for their work and their service.

So I urge my colleagues to join with me on this resolution; and I urge you, Mr. Speaker, to schedule a vote for us, so that we can honor these men and women who work with us each and every day.

Thank you to the Capitol Police officers.

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, we live in quite interesting times. Where else could you invest about \$1 billion and get \$100 billion in return? A Republican Congress, but of course.

As the New York Times recently pointed out, the people's House has turned into the House that Jack built. Here is what the Times says in an op-ed:

These are the men
That fleeced the tribes
That paid the money
That made the bribes
That purchased the Congress
That Jack built.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to read the rest of this poem, written and published last Friday, because it nails right on the head this is the House that Jack built.

Let's look at the \$1.2 billion that Jack Abramoff bought. Let's look at the house he built. The energy industry, oil and gas interests, they spent about \$87 million. What did they get? \$14.5 billion in tax breaks, given and paid for by the United States taxpayers; given access to \$65 billion in oil and gas from the Gulf of Mexico, costing the taxpayers \$7 billion in royalties they should be paying back to the Treasury that they did not get; given \$2 billion to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund. They were given that money, all for \$87 million in contributions and expenses paid on lobbying. \$14 billion in tax breaks, \$7 billion in lost revenue for royalties in the Gulf of Mexico, \$2 billion in tax subsidies there to the ultra-deepwater drilling fund.

You can't get a return on your investment like that on Wall Street.

Where can you get a return like that? The Republican Congress, of course. But that is not limited. In fact, that is prevalent.

Let's take the health care industry. They spent about \$173 million on lobbying and campaign contributions. Yet the pharmaceutical interests, \$139 billion in additional profits over 8 years. The prescription drug bill here, which was supposed to cost \$394 billion, ended up costing close to \$790 billion to the American people.

□ 2000

Private insurers will make \$130 billion in extra profits in Medicare overpayments, HMOs given a \$10 billion slush fund, all for \$173 million in lobbying expenses and contributions mainly to the Republican Party.

Take business interests, spent \$500 million on lobbying. We had a corporate tax bill to fix a \$5 billion disagreement with Europe. By the time it was done, it cost \$150 billion, not \$5 billion, and it never fixed the problem. \$150 billion in corporate giveaways to special interests on the corporate tax bill, \$139 billion in additional profits for the pharmaceutical interests, \$130 billion in additional profits to the HMOs, and in lost revenue to oil and gas companies close to about \$22 billion while oil and gas interests are trading and oil is trading at \$66 a barrel, all in The House That Jack Built.

This is the operative philosophy of the Republican Congress. They have turned the Capitol upside down to figure out how much change they can take over from the American people and pass it off to the special interests.

When the gavel for the Speaker comes down, it is intended to open the people's House, not the auction house. For the last 6 years that gavel has been turned over to the auction house, whether it is the oil and gas interests, whether it is private insurers, whether it is the HMO industry, whether it is in fact the pharmaceutical industry, or whether it came to the corporate tax bill.

Oil is approaching about \$70 a barrel, now nearly \$3 at the pump. Gas home heating costs, up 38 percent. Health care costs are up 58 percent for the average family, \$3,600 in the last 4 years. College costs and tuition, up 38 percent for the American people, yet median incomes are down 2.3 percent, and yet what does this Congress continue to do? It continues to turn itself into an auction house for the special interests. When college costs were up 38 percent, the Republican Congress cut student loans by \$13 billion. Yet, we have continued to pass on over the last 4 years \$3 trillion in additional debt that was borrowed, more than all the predecessors of the last 42 Presidents combined.

One thing you can say about the Republican Congress and President Bush when it comes to the economy: We will be forever in your debt, because that is all you have left is a sea of red ink, and